

## **SMALL GROUP IMPROVISATION**

presented by Evan Feist

[evan@acappellapsych.com](mailto:evan@acappellapsych.com)

**Motor:** A 2-4 bar repeatable pattern that drives the song by giving momentum and leaves space.

**Interlock:** The interlock zigs where the motor zags and fills in the gaps. It usually occupies the other side of the bar from the motor, starting on a different beat.

**Contrast:** The contrast is provided by being the opposite of the Motor and Interlock in terms of articulation, note length, range, syncopation, etc. It gives us more harmonic information by NOT starting on DO, MI, or SOL

- I. Travelling Trios: a trio of singers create a 3 movement improvised piece
  - a. Player 1 creates a Motor, Player 2 creates an Interlock, Player 3 creates a Contrast
  - b. Find an ending. Player 1 goes to the end of line and the roles are shuffled.
  - c. Repeat until all singers have performed all 3 functions.
- II. InstaBand: an improvised piece in at least 5 parts (also known as the A Cappella Game)
  - a. Player 1 creates a Motor, Player 2 creates an Interlock, Player 3 creates a Contrast
  - b. Player 4 adds Percussion & Player 5 sings a Melody
  - c. Harmonies can be added to accommodate more singers.
- III. WeBe3: a 3 part free-form evolving piece
  - a. Player 1 creates a Motor, Player 2 creates and Interlock, Player 3 creates a Contrast
  - b. Once all 3 loops have been created, Players are encouraged to slightly vary their parts to further clarify both their idea and fit with the other parts.
  - c. Listen louder than you sing.
  - d. Heighten & explore.
- IV. ShapeShifting: a free-form leaderless group improvisation
  - a. Half the group gets in circle (standing or sitting) with eyes open while the other half listens intently.
  - b. Take a moment, in silence, to connect with each other.
  - c. Starting with murmuration, start to sing.
  - d. As you hear/feel it and without leading, morph your part to fit what's already going on
  - e. Unison is a wonderful thing.
  - f. Heighten and explore.
  - g. Listen louder than you sing
- V. Organic Arranging: A group improv piece with content either created or arranged
  - a. Leader feeds a Motor, Interlock, and Contrast to a group of singers.
  - b. Singers free harmonize those parts.
  - c. Leader sings the melody over the top of the arrangement.

### **Challenges:**

- Use these forms as team building/warmup activities in your group
- Perform an improvised piece at your next concert
- Post videos of your improves in the Vocal Improvisation and ACA Talent Zone Facebook groups (and tag me, of course!)